VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Benefit Programs

Announces a

Request for Applications

under the

Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)

Program:

Web-based Online Learning Services

Deadline: April 22, 2005   5:00 pm

Sub-Grant Number   GBEN-05-03

NOTE: A pre-application workshop will be held at 1:00 pm, March 25, 2005 at:

Virginia Department of Social Services
7 North 8th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Virginia Department of Social Services seeks applications from e-learning service providers. The provider will supply web-based education modules for use by participants in the Commonwealth's Food Stamp workforce program, the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET).

Eligible Applicants

Providers of web-based, online learning services.

Funding Available and Grant Period

A total of $ 30,000,000.00 in federal funding is available over a three year period subject to the continuing availability of funds. A minimum of 50 percent cash or in-kind match is required. The federal regulations governing the origin and expenditure of Food Stamp Employment and Training matching funds are found in Volume 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR), § 277.4 (d).

Matching funds must be non-federal in origin, and must not be committed to any other federal match program. The initial funding period for sub-grants will be June 1, 2005 through October 1, 2005. The funding period will be renewable. The Department may make multiple awards as part of this request.

How to Apply

Applicants requesting funding must submit two original and five copies of the e-Learning Sub-grant Application. All submittals should be fastened in such a way that parts can be easily separated. Applications must be received no later than 5:00 pm, April 22, 2005. Mail applications to:

Virginia Department of Social Services
Division of Benefit Programs
Attention: Faye Palmer, Grant Administrator
7 North 8th Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia, 23219

Applications may be hand-delivered to the above address by 5:00 pm, April 22, 2005.

Emailed or faxed applications will not be considered.

If an application is submitted to the Department past the posted submission deadline, the Grant Administrator, with appropriate documentation of the circumstances, may decide to accept the late application. Copies of all documentation and a narrative of the rationale for accepting the application must be included in the RFA file.

Informational Workshop

To aid applicants in their sub-grant application preparation, the Division of Benefit Programs is sponsoring a half-day pre-application workshop. The workshop will be held at 1:00 pm on March 25, 2005, at:

<div align="center">

Virginia Department of Social Services
7 North 8th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Please notify David Scoven of intent to attend the workshop no later than 4:00 pm, March 18, 2005

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Any organization intending to submit a sub-grant application may send a representative to the workshop. The workshop will include an overview of the e-Learning program, sub-grant requirements and preparation, budget development, and information about the sub-grant review process. Please bring a copy of the sub-grant application packet to the workshop.

Additional Information

Copies of this sub-grant application, including the necessary sub-grant application forms and instructions, may be downloaded from the DSS website

http://www.dss.state.va.us

Access the documents through the "Grants" link on the right side near the top of the page. Sub-grant award notices will also be posted on this website.

If you have additional questions regarding the sub-grant application, please contact:

David Scoven
(804) 726-7366
david.scoven@dss.virginia.gov

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

Program Overview

The e-Learning program is intended to significantly improve access to quality education and training services for the Commonwealth's FSET participants.

Program Requirements

Sub-grantee will:

1. Provide web-based education courses (modules), including the following:

   a) Adult Basic Education including reading, writing and basic math;
   b) General Educational Development Certificate (GED) preparatory courses;
   c) High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) preparatory courses;
   d) English as Second Language (Levels A through D);
   e) Introduction to the Personal Computer;
   f) Basic computer skills (personal computing, e.g., basic use of MS Word, E-mail, Internet, etc.)

   Optional course offerings may include:

   - Basic business computing
   - Advanced business computer skills (advanced use of MS Office)
   - Basic website development
   - Advanced website development
   - Other education and training courses

   Optional program components may include:

   - Statewide computer access programs (i.e., computer access at physical locations across the Commonwealth for FSET participants)
   - Online assessment tools (i.e., student diagnostic tools designed to identify appropriate courses of study)
   - Live mentoring

2. Provide individual account access (e.g., via password) with reliable progress-tracking. In order to meet program requirements, tracking capabilities must be able to measure the amount of time a participant spends in each program component on a weekly basis and each participant's progress toward completion.

3. Possess the capacity to develop new courses and upgrade existing courses as necessary.

III.   APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

In order to be considered for funding, all applicants must submit two original and five copies of the following documents in the following order:

1. SUB-GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET (with signatures)
2. ASSURANCES *(For Federal Programs)* (with signatures)
3. ASSURANCES-NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS (with signatures)
3. FULL PRODUCT DESCRIPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL. This should include end user and administrator perspectives access to the product and access process for demonstration purposes.
4. WORK PLAN NARRATIVE – Not to exceed 12 pages
5. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FORM
6. PROPOSED BUDGET – <u>must</u> include ALL of the following:
    a. ITEMIZED BUDGET – SALARIES AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FORM
    b. ITEMIZED BUDGET – MATCH DOCUMENTATION FORM
    c. A clear explanation of expenses in narrative form. Failure to provide a budget narrative will result in rejection of the application.
    d. Identification of the source of match funds and the CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE (with signatures).
7. CURRENT LETTERS OF SUPPORT or COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS (optional)
8. PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND ONGOING COMMITMENTS
9. W-9 REQUEST FOR TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER(S) AND CERTICICATE
10. REFERENCES

Applications must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant. All information requested should be submitted. Failure to submit all information requested may result in the purchasing agency requiring prompt submission of missing information and/or giving a lowered evaluation of the proposal. Applications which are substantially incomplete or lack key information may be rejected by the agency. Mandatory requirements are those required by law or regulation or are such that they cannot be waived and are not subject to negotiation.

1. SUB-GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

A Sub-grant Application Cover Sheet is attached and must be submitted as the cover page of the sub-grant application. Applications without required signatures will not be considered.

2. REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES

Two lists of Assurances for federally programs and the General Sub-grant Conditions and Assurances are included with the application forms. Proposals without signatures on these documents will not be considered.

3. WORK PLAN NARRATIVE

The work plan narrative must not exceed 12 pages and must be organized in a manner that clearly addresses each of the following, in the order listed. Narratives that are concise and specific will be viewed most favorably.

      A. Project Design Summary

      B. Project Design

      C. Plan for Evaluation

      D. Evidence of Capacity

For guidance relating to the contents of A-D, see § IV, page 8, (Process for Review and Criteria for Award).

4. OUTCOMES

Describe specifically, the outcome(s) you hope to achieve by implementing the proposed project.

State the measurable goal(s)/objective(s) of the proposed initiative and the activities proposed to achieve the goals and objectives established.

5. PROPOSED BUDGET

Complete the Itemized Budget forms. Attach to the Itemized Budget forms the following:
a. A budget narrative that includes i.) description of each proposed expenditure and ii.) justifies the proposed expenditure by explaining the need for it. Dollar amounts for in-kind match must be thoroughly justified and included in this budget narrative.
b. Federal Matching Funds Assurance Document (with signatures)

All expenses included in the application must be allowable under federal and state regulations, must be reasonable and necessary and apply directly to the project.

(List any budget parameters, expenses not allowed, etc.)

6. LETTERS OF SUPPORT or COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

Current letters of support or collaborative agreements from agencies and organizations directly involved in the proposed program or activity may be included.

IV. PROCESS OF REVIEW AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD

Sub-grant applications will be reviewed by a panel of individuals who have demonstrated expertise in a specific program area and will make programmatic and budgetary recommendations for sub-grant award.

A. <u>Specific Criteria to Be Used By Sub-grant Reviewers</u>:

   1. <u>Quality of Project Design</u> 40 points

      a. Quality of proposed services
      b. Clarity of design
      c. Feasibility and economy
      d. Reflects state-of-the-art practice
      e. Utilizes evidence based practice

   2. <u>Plan for Evaluation</u> 20 points

      a. The evaluation plan measures project outputs (quantity) and outcomes (quality) of services.
      b. The evaluation plan utilizes researched-based instruments, when practicable.
      c. The evaluation of outcomes is based on the stated goals, objectives and activities.

   3. <u>Evidence of Capacity and Support</u> 40 points

      a. Current technical capacity
      b. Current staff capacity
      c. Projections concerning staffing capacity increases that will be necessary to fulfill the Project Design.

B. <u>Award to Sub-grantees:</u>

The Request for Applications process is a competitive process and awards are given based on a review of criteria defined within the RFA and negotiations of final terms. The Department reserves the right to make single or multiple awards. The Department may withdraw the RFA or reject applications at any time prior to the award.

V. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Real-time access to individual records and progress data (client tracking);
2. Quarterly statistical reports (aggregated access, participation and progress data);
3. Quarterly Statement of Funding Sources / Certification of Compliance with Federal Matching Fund Regulations (documenting and certifying that the 50% match is from non-federal funds and that such match is not used as match for any other federal initiatives).

The federal regulations controlling the origin and expenditure of Food Stamp Employment and Training matching funds are found in Volume 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR), § 277.4 (d).

VI. APPLICATION FORMS (Attached)

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